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A REPORT ON THE CITY OF EDMONTON

concerning

THE STATE OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

and

ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE

TOWN PLANNING ACT 1929.

Planning and Development  
**LIBRARY**  
The City of Edmonton

John Bland  
Harold Spence-Sales  
September 9th, 1949.

## CONTENTS

### SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

#### PART I - PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The Pattern of the City.

Roads.

Public Buildings.

Commercial Buildings.

Warehousing and Industrial Buildings.

Residential Buildings.

Amenities.

Health and Educational Services.

#### PART II ADMINISTRATION

The Scope of Planning since 1929.

The Town Planning Commission.

The Major Street Plan.

The Zoning Bylaw and the Zoning Appeal Board.

Municipal Organization.

District Planning.

Statutory Procedure.

Conclusions.

Appendices.

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Edmonton, Alberta,  
September 9th, 1949.

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, and  
THE CITY COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF EDMONTON.

Gentlemen:

We were asked to examine and report upon the physical development of The City of Edmonton and the administrative organization established by virtue of the provisions of the Town Planning Act, 1929.

The terms of reference gave our investigations a wide scope. Within the time that we have been in Edmonton, it has only been possible to review conditions very broadly and to present our report in terms of generalities.

The report is divided into two parts:

Part I deals with the physical conditions in The City of Edmonton and its surroundings. It presents observations which aim at drawing attention to principles which should be taken into account in the planning of the City.

Part II deals with administration concerned with the planning in The City of Edmonton. It presents a number of recommendations for the re-organization of planning administration within the City. It also deals with bringing into being a form of planning control extending over an area of the countryside surrounding the City.

We wish to acknowledge the courtesy and assistance extended to us by the members of the Civic Departments and of the Provincial Departments of Public Works and Municipal Affairs.

Respectfully submitted.

John Bland.

Harold Spence-Sales.



## THE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### PART I - PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

#### OBSERVATIONS

##### The Pattern of The City

The City of Edmonton is divided into functional use districts, evolved from transportation, the physical features and normal growth.

The comprehensive planning of Edmonton is dependent upon a thorough understanding of major and local systems of transport, predominant use areas and the areas of transition.

The primary step in the planning of the City is the delineation of natural areas. They require to be clearly established with respect to their internal functions and their external relationships.

##### Roads

The planning of streets must be based upon four objectives; a system of limited access roads to bring highway traffic rapidly to convenient points within the city; radiating roads to serve the central area; cross town roads for inter-district communication; and a definite policy concerning the true function of local streets.

A preliminary study of the roads is included in the appendix -

##### Public Buildings

The locality for the proposed civic centre will best serve the needs of expanding municipal services. The precinct of institutional buildings south of Jasper Avenue occupies a focal position in the natural setting of the City in which the amenities of the river valley and accessibility from all quarters afford a proper setting for public buildings of a cultural order.

##### Commercial Buildings

The allocation of land for shopping use must be based upon maximum accessibility, concentration and the provisions of adequate off street parking. The over allocation of land for shopping is one of the specific causes of depreciation.

##### Offices

To assure an economic use of land at a low density and with adequate restrictions regarding day lighting and amenities, location for office buildings should be determined east of 101st Street.

The concept of precinct development should be pursued in compliment to the proposed federal building.

##### Parking

The alleviation of parking problems is dependent upon both private interests and the City.

All large scale buildings within the central area must provide off street parking facilities for their occupants.

The City must also provide parking squares to the east and west of the central commercial district.

Within a defined area street parking should thereupon be prohibited.



## Warehousing and Industrial Buildings

### Warehouses

Much confusion arises in considering warehouses in the same category as industry, and a further differentiation is required as between distributing and exporting types.

Because of expediency much wastage of land has occurred, in encouraging warehouse development to locate itself sporadically.

The allocation of land for warehousing requires to be considered so as to produce concentrations of development in appropriate localities suited to their particular functions.

### Industries

Our observations reveal an extensive wastage of land which has for considerable time been allocated to industrial use, such areas are difficult to consolidate while new industrial sites are being offered in a changing pattern. Under such conditions a serious problem of urban blight is beginning to show itself. In this respect it is urgently necessary that consideration be given to the conservation of existing industrial areas before too rapid a spread takes place.

The space industries now require has exceeded the amount of available serviced land within prescribed areas. It is considered advisable for the City to service land in the partially settled industrial areas now rather than face inevitable extensions of services, roads and public transport later.

### Residential Buildings

The post war extension of housing development has resulted in the main in a monotonous growth of the gridiron pattern of the City. The further development of large units of municipally owned land should be patterned freely and with a higher density according to more modern techniques.

Low income housing cannot be achieved without the establishment of a local housing authority with considerable subsidy by Provincial or Federal Government.

As a means to meet temporarily, the acute over-crowded conditions in the City, the local authority should embark upon a project of providing materials at cost for the erection of houses at a reduced standard of accommodation.

So as to assess the critical significance of the state of over-crowding, a survey should be undertaken upon the standard of housing as outlined by the American Public Health Association, coupled with a survey of social conditions organized by the local welfare agencies.

### Amenities

It is suggested that the Provincial Government should acquire the valley of the river beyond the limits of the City as a Provincial Park and be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the parkway system in the district of the capital.

Land to be allocated for open space should be set out in areas conforming with modern recreational standards.

A program of street planting should be undertaken.

Control over architectural design of buildings should be exercised throughout the City.



## Health and Education

Consideration should be given to the establishment of hospital centres.

Land should be reserved for the convenient siting of health clinics in neighborhood centres.

The provision of land for schools should be based on modern standards of playground space requirements.

The University district should be safeguarded against encroachments but multiple occupation for the purpose of student accommodation should be permitted.

## PART II ADMINISTRATION

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### The Scope of Planning since 1929

It is recommended that the City Council adopt, by resolution, a proposal to plan The City of Edmonton within the full meaning of the Act and upon such a resolution to impose an interim development control upon development in the City, pending the bringing into being of an official plan.

To ensure the full realization of planning objectives, the Council should establish quite clearly throughout the administrative organization, an understanding that planning far exceeds a subordinate role in City Management, and that it entails the direction and co-ordination of every municipal responsibility towards the achievement of a well balanced and ordered development of the City as a whole.

#### The Town Planning Commission

It is recommended that the Bylaw appointing the Town Planning Commission under the provisions of the Town Planning Act, be revoked.

The Council should however appoint a citizen committee outside the provisions of the Town Planning Act entitled The Citizens' Planning Committee for the purpose of obtaining public opinion and advice on matters of general planning interest.

In order to fulfil the functions to be proposed with respect to the preparation of planning schemes and their implementation, the City Council should establish a Standing Committee on City planning.

So as to ensure equity with respect to planning functions to be exercised by the City of Edmonton, it is recommended that the procedures under Sec. 14 to 19 the Act, relative to the authority of the Minister with respect to his powers of approval, should be assiduously followed by Council, and furthermore that Section 13 of the Act, respecting adherence to an official town plan, should be thoroughly understood and recognized throughout the municipal organization.

#### The Major Street Plan

It is recommended that the Major Street Plan be revoked on the grounds that it performs no useful purpose with respect to the planning of the City.

#### The Zoning Bylaw and the Zoning Appeal Board

##### The Bylaw

It is recommended that the Zoning Bylaw at present in existence, be revoked and that an interim development control should be exercised, pending the bringing into being of a new Zoning Bylaw.



## The Zoning Bylaw and the Zoning Appeal Board (continued)

### The Bylaw (continued)

The revised Zoning Bylaw should be set up as an instrument of implementation of an official Town Plan, and it should not be brought into effect until an official plan has been adopted.

When the Zoning Bylaw is being redrafted, the clauses of the bylaw should be written by the City Solicitor in close association with the City Planner.

Architectural control be exercised over the whole of the Municipal area and an adjudicating panel on architectural design should be established, consisting of The City Architect and two members of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

Means of advertising control should be devised for all non residential districts and control should be exercised with vigor.

### The Zoning Appeal Board

It is recommended that the Zoning Appeal Board be continued, but that its discretionary powers be limited, and furthermore that any of its decisions, bordering upon matters which may require to be dealt with by Bylaw amendment, must follow the procedure laid down by the Planning Act.

Appeal from the decisions of the Zoning Appeal Board should be allowed and the Minister of Public Works should be the final arbiter.

The City Planning Officer should be an appointed member of the Zoning Appeal Board with the full right to vote.

### Municipal Organization

To carry out fully the scope of planning that is advocated, the municipal organization should be established as follows:

Title: - That the Technical Development Board should be re-entitled "The City Planning and Development Board".

Membership:- That the Board should have a central or working committee, composed of The City Engineer, the City Architect, the Medical Officer of Health and the City Planner, and one of the Commissioners as an ex-officio member. As soon as it is considered appropriate the City Planner should be appointed the Chairman of the Board.

In general the working committee should be authorized to draw into its deliberations any department, including the Industrial Commissioner, that is concerned with any aspect of the development of the City.

Duties:- That its function be expanded to co-ordinate all municipal duties and responsibilities, - economic, social, physical and administrative - so as to be able to outline policy with respect to the planning and development of the City as a whole, in particular, to be responsible for -

- (a) the preparation of an outline town plan,
- (b) the preparation of a zoning bylaw required to implement the adopted outline town plan,
- (c) the preparation of such official schemes as are required from time to time to implement the adopted outline town plan.



## Municipal Organization (continued)

### The City Planner:

That the Board should delegate to the City Planner such technical and other investigations as are involved in the preparation of the outline plan, the zoning bylaw, and schemes of implementation.

**Procedure:** That the Board should conform with the established procedure of presenting its advice and recommendations to the Council through the City Commissioners.

Besides his duties with the Planning and Development Board, the City Planner will be required to undertake many routine administrative and technical duties and to establish and organize the working of his department.

It is recommended that the duties and responsibilities of the City Planning Department should be clearly demarcated with respect to other civic departments, particularly in relation to The City Architect and Building Inspector's Department, so that an immediate transference is affected between zoning functions on the one hand and the functions of the Building Inspector on the other.

With respect to the administration of the Zoning Bylaw it is recommended that the Building Inspector should release the member of his staff most conversant with the administration and day to day routines of the Zoning Bylaw, and that all papers and data, relevant thereto, be transferred to the City Planner.

In order to undertake the duties that may be delegated to the City Planner by the Board with respect to the preparation of an outline plan, the revision of the Zoning Bylaw and the preparation of schemes of implementation, the City Planning Department should be provided with adequate technical and administrative staff as soon as possible. In this respect it is considered that the City Planner should be provided with an Assistant, with the rank of an Assistant Superintendent, three technical assistants and one town planning inspector. (including the transfer from the City Architect's Department). In addition the Department should be given adequate secretarial and clerical assistance, and should be provided with sufficient accommodation to establish a well equipped drafting room with appropriate facilities.

The City Planner should be empowered, and provided with a sufficient budget to develop public relations and to embark upon a program of stimulating and educating public interest in planning matters.

It is recommended that a District Planning Board for Edmonton and the surrounding countryside should be established as follows:

**Title:** The Edmonton District Planning Board.

### Constituent Members of the District:

The City of Edmonton, The Towns of St. Albert, Beverly, Fort Saskatchewan, Devon and Leduc. The Municipal Districts of Stony Plain, Sturgeon, Strathcona, Morinville and Leduc.

### Members of the Board:

One member to be nominated by The Minister of Public Works and one from each of the constituent members.

### Duties and Responsibilities:

To exercise Planning control on behalf of constituent members if so desired, over a defined area, contained by a number of townships within the municipal districts and over the City of Edmonton and the towns of Beverly, St. Albert, Devon, Fort Saskatchewan and Leduc, in particular to safeguard the



## Municipal Organization (continued)

### Duties and

#### Responsibilities:

(continued)

growth of settlement so as to ensure a balanced and well ordered development of urbanization in this area, respecting health, education, highways, etc. etc.

### Technical Staff:

The technical staff of the Provincial Town Planning Branch under the direction of The Director of Town Planning, to be expanded so as to undertake appropriate technical and other investigations, and the routine administration under the Act.

### Financial Contributions:

The Government of Alberta to be responsible for the major portion of the monies required to establish and maintain the technical services necessary, the constituent members contributing the remainder on an agreed basis.

It is suggested that this recommendation be transmitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Public Works and the Municipalities referred to above, with the request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Public Works initiate the formation of the Edmonton and District Planning Board.

## Statutory Procedure

The procedures recommended depart in some respect from the provisions of The Town Planning Act. It is recommended that the City Solicitor and the City Planner discuss the matter with the Provincial Department of Town Planning and the Attorney General and report upon the legal complexities to be met.

## CONCLUSIONS

During the last 20 years The City of Edmonton has exercised a beneficial control over the municipality with the assistance of the Town Planning Commission. The stature of the City has now grown to the extent that it is able to exercise such control more fully. The appointment of the City Planner is evidence of its intentions to do so and the coming into being of the Technical Development Board mark a step forward in the co-ordination of the technical organization of the municipal administration.

With the expression of public opinion, and the cultivation of citizen interest in the problems of planning that lie ahead of the City of Edmonton, the stage can be set for the positive implementation of the Town Planning Act.

The observations and recommendations presented in this report are framed so as to point out the salient features in the physical pattern of the City, and the administrative measures that would need to be taken into account to embark upon fuller planning responsibilities under the Town Planning Act.



## PART 1.

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

#### THE PATTERN OF THE CITY

##### Major Transportation

The precise region of Edmonton has varied over the years. At some times it has been the nearby surrounding plain, at others a much wider area stretching far to the north and north-west. Activities in the City have always reflected the degree of prosperity of the region and transportation facilities have been of utmost importance. Each in turn, the river, the over-land trails, the railways, the airways and the highways have affected the growth and design of the City.

Edmonton has grown about various means of transport, each having particular effects, because of their nature and the areas that they serve. The meandering river, the first line of transport, no longer serves this purpose. It localized the settlement and the lines of the river lots have patterned some of its streets. Its varying banks, flats and tributary ravines have determined bridge points and open spaces. The whole river valley forms a spacious natural park through the City which has a profound effect upon its pattern. The most desirable residential areas have been near its banks, and it has provided the most prominent sites for public buildings.

The old over-land trails can still be seen through the later rectilinear road system that was based upon the orderly disposal of land. These natural lines still carry the bulk of traffic towards the heart of the City and urban development has grown outwards along them. Jasper Avenue is the natural link in the trails to the west, north-west and north-east. The City continues to grow along the trail lines and to concentrate where they flow together in the centre.

The railways have been the most significant factor in the expansion of Edmonton. Trackage is as important to the City as quay-sides are to a seaport. Two important functions that the railways serve are separated. Inc-coming goods are brought directly into the centre, stored in warehouses and marketed in the retail stores nearby or transhipped again. Produce for



## The Pattern of the City (continued)

export, grain, live-stock and minerals are collected on the fringes near the railway yards. The railway lines are consequently the centre lines of belts of warehouses, industries and yards, which together with the river divided the City into definite sectors:-

North of the River, the central area surrounded by Norwood and the Hudsons Bay Reserve; the West End; Westmount, Glenora and Jasper Place.

South of the river, the University, Garneau and Central Scona on the west, and on the east, East Scona and Bonnie Doon.

These sectors, further divided by ravines or main roads form the nuclei of the principal districts of the City.

The Municipal Airport is immediately accessible to the business <sup>the railways,</sup> centre/ high-ways and industries. It has brought wealth and prominence to the City. Its detrimental effects are due to noise, the restricting position it occupies in the City and the limitations it imposes on surrounding buildings. The great airport at Nemaio to the north and some six miles beyond the City limits, is being developed as a R.C.A.F. station and in time can be expected to have an effect upon the growth and pattern of the City.

### Local transportation

The functions of reception and distribution produce a basic pattern. The needs of the great numbers of people that fulfil these primary purposes and other related services bring about a more intricate and inter-weaving pattern. The principal factor that has determined the subordinate pattern is accessibility. The internal transportation system in relation to physical features has defined areas of predominant use.

### Central Area

The central area contains the wholesale warehouses for the merchandise that the City distributes. They extend along the railway throughout the centre and along the spur lines between 102nd and 105th Streets. It contains Retail shops which have a regional as well as a City wide significance, administrative and financial offices; the railway and bus stations; hotels; central market; theatres and cafes. The area is bounded by the railway



### The Pattern of the City (continued)

yards on the north and west, 97th Street on the east and 100th Avenue on the south. It is roughly half a square mile in extent. Business premises are most intensively developed along 101st Street and Jasper Avenue. Shops face the streets served by public transport vehicles and used as important pedestrian routes.

There are still a number of residential premises in the central area which can no longer accommodate family life. The continued operation of substandard houses have prevented a full and economic use of land.

A number of civic buildings are sited in this area, east of 100th Street in a part that is less intensively used for business. It is proposed to set aside a portion for a civic centre, which would include a public auditorium, an art gallery, a federal government building, a new public market, a City Hall and a hotel.

### Transitional areas

As the City has grown it has spread outwards leaving near its centre, buildings that have been outworn or whose arrangements are no longer economic or fashionable, so that immediately surrounding its central area of greatest business activity is its most transitional zone. A part which was once the most fashionable area of the City, contains the Provincial Parliament and Office Buildings, the City Library, the Legion Building, the Edmonton Club and numerous other Associations. This is a well defined and indispensable precinct of the City, which is making its transition gracefully. As a special precinct it accommodates essential administrative and social institutions related to the heart of the City.

From 97th Street to 92nd Street, south of the railway, there occurs another area of transition, where there are old buildings of various kinds that had once been good family dwellings which now accommodate numerous work shops and poor people in crowded conditions. It is the area where the housing standards of the City are the lowest and where the people are the most mixed in racial origin. In times of rapid growth many out-of-town people come into this area to be lodged while seeking employment. Due to the numbers of strangers and the cosmopolitan nature of even the permanent inhabitants, it



## The Pattern of the City (continued)

is the area of least social control. Its problems are being relieved gradually by the removal of families with children to more healthful parts of the City. This trend needs to be assisted and in the meantime standards of healthful housing should be closely watched.

North of the Railway, east of 101st Street up to Norwood Boulevard and Clark Stadium, there is another transitional area of old residential development. The area contains many foreign born citizens in over crowded conditions. It is a rooming house area.

There is another transitional district north of the centre beyond the railway and warehouses, west of 101st Street and east of the cemetery. This was the area of the Hudson Bay Reserve which was opened for development in 1912. The transitional aspect of this area lies in the conflict between warehouse and residential usages which has resulted in loose utilization of a locality that had great industrial potential.

There is a further transitional area south of the railway, west of 109th Street, up to the Groat Ravine. This is an old residential locality which shows transition in the alteration of large single-family houses into flats, but it has preserved and will continue to have, a pleasant residential character.

Below the crest of the valley on the north bank of the river, there are two distinct residential areas, Rosssdale and Riverdale. They have specific physical characteristics by which they are most clearly defined. Both have some mixed land uses within them.

### Firm Residential areas

West of the Groat Ravine, south of 106th Avenue and 142nd Street, and bounded on the south by the river bank, lies the district of Glenora, which presently enjoys the highest reputation of all the residential districts of the City. Its amenities will secure its popular favour for a long time.

South of Glenora, bounded by ravines and the City limits, there is Capital Hill, which is presently being developed and will constitute a specific residential area.



## The Pattern of the City (continued)

To the west, but not legally within the City limits, is the district of West Jasper Place. It is a normal extension of the City directly accessible to the centre. Greater development can be expected here. Urban services are now urgently required.

South of the river there are also equally specific residential areas, Windsor Park; the University area; Garneau; and Strathcona, divided west and east by the C.P.R. into Central and East Scona. The last is an older residential district which reveals some changes from single family occupation to lodging houses, particularly for University students.

South of Whyte Avenue, in the vicinity of Queen Alexandra School, there is another residential area. To the west, Beau Park is developing into a residential district. Further south the McKernan Lake area and beyond it Pleasantview, are both expanding residential localities.

South of East Scona there is the Ritchie District. East of the Ravine and bounded by the top of the valley, are the growing residential districts of Bonnie Doon and King Edward Park. North of these, are the newer residential districts of Cloverdale and Forest Heights.

Beyond the central ring of residential districts north of the river, there are out-lying localities, each with individual characters. Highlands to the east is bounded by the Exhibition Grounds, 118th Avenue and the edge of the valley; Santa Rosa is bounded on the north and west by the Packing House plants; Beverly is an incorporated town adjoining the City limits; Norwood, Parkdale, Westwood, Fairview, Delton and Eastwood lie north of Norwood Boulevard; Westmount lies beyond the Airport and the Prince Rupert Golf Links. Calder, Elm Park, Lauderdale and North Edmonton are north of the C.N.R. railway.

Each of these neighborhoods is a functional area of the City. Most have local shopping places and local institutions that serve them. All are dependent upon the facilities of the central area. Besides the needs of a good neighborhood life they require rapid transport service to the central area of the City.



## The Pattern of the City (continued)

### Observations

The comprehensive planning of Edmonton is dependent upon a thorough understanding of the major and local systems of transport, the predominant use areas and the areas of transition.

The primary step in the planning of the City is the delineation of natural areas. They require to be clearly established with respect to their internal functions and their external relationships.

An approximate outline of natural areas are shown in Appendix I.

### ROADS

The pattern of roads is a uniform grid of streets running north and south, and avenues running east and west. Vehicular usages has differentiated the nature of the streets. The radial arteries which have followed the old trails and the lines of original settlement, converge upon the City centre from the outlying districts - the cross town routes have developed as the City grew to lead from one locality to another. The local streets have developed as parcels of land have come into use. Until recently this pattern of roads has served to provide communications between outlying areas and the central core and local needs but with the increase of heavy highway traffic certain of these principal routes have been forced to carry long distance transport vehicles. The long distance vehicles require to pass through as rapidly and as conveniently as possible. For them the numerous cross-streets and the presence of pedestrians are hindrances and heavy vehicles are themselves nuisances in the areas through which they pass. In principle, an efficient circulatory system depends upon reserving certain roads to act as main distribution arteries for through traffic, quite separate from the direct radial connections of outlying districts with the business centre and the cross-road system of inter-communication. These three road classifications in turn are separate from the purely residential roads, which all desire to be quiet and reserved exclusively for vehicles approaching houses. Precisely how such a pattern of roads should be determined is beyond the scope of this report as it requires a detailed analysis, but it is necessary to stress the principle that a street plan should be based upon four distinct purposes.



## Roads (continued)

### Limited Access Highways

The highways entering the City carry vehicles of all kinds. Some are private motor cars that have as their objective the business centre or may be proceeding home in any one of many residential areas. Near the City limits such vehicles should be given the opportunity of proceeding directly to the centre or of branching off left or right on to roads that would lead them to their part of the City without necessarily passing through the congested centre. Other vehicles on the highway are trucks desiring to penetrate the central warehouse district or one of the outlying industrial areas. These vehicles may have come from a great distance. A slight deflection which avoids a built up area is a matter of little concern for them. Their habit is to move rapidly on routes that have great curvatures and good grades. Right angle corners and numerous stops in traffic are far more objectionable than detours to avoid such conditions. Therefore near the City limits it should be possible for trucks to deflect right or left on a ring road which should be more in the nature of a highway than a City street. It should have very few intersections with City streets, just a sufficient number, at possibly three-quarters of a mile apart, to enable vehicles to penetrate the City at points which would be convenient for their purpose. Under no circumstances should such vehicles be forced to use the central business streets.

Having regard to Edmonton's distributive function there can be no doubt that truck traffic will increase and highway improvements within the City will be necessary. These need to be determined now in order that present opportunities should not be lost by haphazard development.

With respect to the actual design of a system of limited access roads, it will be necessary to consider further bridges near the eastern and western limits. Economical bridge sites are few because of the physical characteristics of the river. The present concentration of bridges in the central area is the natural outcome of radial street design. However, as traffic increases it will be necessary to have additional bridges to draw traffic away from the centre and particularly to avoid the necessity of funnelling through the central area, all vehicles that merely wish to cross the river.



## ROADS (continued)

Consequently the line of a ring road system would need to be determined in relation to the factors of suitable crossing places.

### Radial Routes

Vehicles radiate outwards from the business centre of the City to the suburbs. The daily life of the City requires such direct routes leading to and from the business centre. These are the lines of the public transit system. In all cases they are the old roads of the City along which its development has grown. They are direct and convenient and if relieved of through traffic, they should fulfil their function satisfactorily.

### Cross Town Roads

Cross town thoroughfares are as necessary to the smooth operation of a street system as limited access and radial routes. Their function is to provide inter-district communication. Certain avenues are most clearly used for this purpose. Custom alone has determined which combination of streets and avenues are used to perform inter-district communication. A street plan should recognize the function of such roads and provide consistent widths and easy curves at points where an avenue swings into a street in making its circuit. By means of lighting and planting, cross town thoroughfares can be made more popular, thereby helping to relieve the radial streets from the burden of carrying cross town traffic.

### Local Streets

Local Streets serve limited areas and are tributary to, but do not comprise a part of the main thoroughfare system. In a gridiron plan each street is a potential artery which deprives local streets of their domestic scale and the clear distinction that they are residential, into which through traffic has no place. Such streets should be blocked or looped so that traffic would be discouraged from using them. Some short lengths could be closed to vehicles altogether, in order to achieve safety and quietness. Temporary road blocks might be used to test the neighborhood opinion on this question as one would expect a strong and positive re-action to any suggestion that would deprive a householder of a convenience that he enjoys. But the amenity that more restricted residential roads provide for adults and children alike



## ROADS (continued)

would commend itself after some trial.

### Observations

The planning of streets must be based upon four objectives; a system of limited access roads to bring highway traffic rapidly to convenient points within the City; radiating roads to serve the central area; cross town roads for inter-district communication; and a definite policy concerning the true function of local streets.

### A Preliminary Study

Of the seven Provincial highways entering the City, the Calgary Trail is the principal one. It enters the City by 104th Street, Whyte Avenue and the High Level Bridge. Before reaching the built-up area on the South Side it should be possible to deflect this highway westward, skirting the residential development over to the Saskatchewan Drive, dropping down east of the Mayfair Golf Club, bridging the river to the Victoria Park, proceeding up the Groat Ravine under 102nd Avenue, and travelling north to 116th Avenue and St. Albert Trail. At about 106th Avenue this road should intersect a new highway supplementing the Jasper Highway and traversing the abandoned railway grade from Winterburn. Thereby providing a direct contact from the Calgary Trail to the St. Albert Trail (Alaska) and to the Jasper Highway along which there must be no development and a restricted number of intersections.

Similarly a new limited access road should branch from the Calgary Trail, travelling eastward to 75th Street and then across the river to the Highlands Golf Links. From there it should branch westward up Rat Creek under the 82nd Street Bridge to a junction with the Stadium Road and 86th Street. From the Highlands it should also branch eastward up the bank to 58th Street and to the Fort Trail. The Fort Trail and the St. Albert Trail should be connected along 132nd Avenue. These roads would bring highway traffic rapidly to many points through and around the City, where it could be diffused or collected without taxing the capacity of the central area streets and bridges.

The radial routes have been taken to be the present main highways of the



## ROADS (continued)

City. The cross town circulation routes have been determined in relation to inter-communication between predominant use areas.

These routes are required to meet future traffic developments that cannot be accommodated on the existing streets.

These studies are illustrated in appendix 2.

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The civic buildings lie in the vicinity of the Market place in the eastern part of the main business section. In this area it is proposed to construct a civic centre to contain a number of additional buildings of municipal importance, arranged about or in an open space. Within this group a Federal Office building will be constructed on 101a Avenue opposite the Post Office.

In the vicinity of the Legislative Building there is a group of public buildings which include the Provincial Administrative Building, churches, clubs, civic societies and Government offices accommodated in former private houses, together with the Municipal Library and the Legion Building. The area could accommodate additional public buildings with advantage, for example, the Art Gallery, the Civic Auditorium and similar institutional buildings because of the convenience of the locality and the amenities of its surroundings.

The Public Market on the other hand is a building closely related to the shops and busy streets of the eastern section of the main business area where it is well located. The shops around it all have a close relationship to it and serve the country people who come to market.

## Observations

The locality for the proposed civic centre will best serve the needs for expanding municipal services. The precinct of institutional buildings south of Jasper Avenue occupies a focal position in the natural setting of the City in which the amenities of the river valley and accessibility from all quarters afford a proper setting for public buildings of a cultural order.



## COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

### Retail Stores

The central retail store area is contained between 100th Street, Jasper Avenue and 103rd Street and 103rd Avenue. It is served by the entire public transit network.

The principle stores lie along 101st Street and Jasper Avenue, concentrating below 103rd Avenue on 101st and between 105th Street and 100th Street on Jasper. There has been no consolidation beyond lineal development.

Development is constricted on the west by spur lines serving warehouses which in effect limits expansion along immediate cross streets. The lineal structure is emphasized by the public transit lines on Jasper Avenue and 101st Street.

For convenience and accessibility the area requires consolidation about 103rd Street to 100A Street from Jasper Avenue to 102nd Avenue by means of the removal of wasteful development. A service station in this area is an unwarranted use.

Extending outward from the central shopping focus of the City, retail stores have developed in an attenuated pattern along the principal routes of communication. This development is similar to the growth of wasteful land use and marginal shopping found in other cities as the result of over-zoning for commercial purposes along major streets. These lineal developments should no longer be permitted under zoning control and specific care should be taken to protect any new city thoroughfares from such forms of development.

There are suburban shopping centres throughout the City. Whyte Avenue on the South Side is the most prominent of these but in the West End and in the North east of the City there are others. The logical place for suburban shops is in the vicinity of the intersection of two well travelled streets. It is appropriate and desirable to encourage the development of compact suburban shopping centres, but to permit shops to string along the main roads from one suburban shopping centre to another is inconvenient, unsightly and probably a bad business practice. These suburban shopping places are conveniences for the residential neighborhoods that they serve, but should



## COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS (continued)

not be spread out on all four corners of an intersection. In all residential shopping places location should provide adequate off-street parking.

### Observation

The allocation of land for shopping use must be based upon maximum-accessibility, concentration and the provision of adequate off-street parking. The over allocation of land for shopping is one of the specific causes of depreciation.

## OFFICES

Business and professional offices are concentrated at the intersection of 101st Avenue and Jasper Avenue in specially constructed commercial buildings. No requirements are enforced with respect to parking. The Market Square and surrounding streets are used for this purpose. Lighting internal courts is not assured by adequate regulations. Further concentration of similar development will accentuate these omissions severely.

Though there is a shortage of office accommodation no building is taking place because of present construction costs. The spill over into old residential buildings south of Jasper Avenue is an outcome.

### Observations

To assure an economic use of land at a low density and with adequate restrictions regarding day lighting and amenities, location for offices should be determined east of 101st Street.

The concept of precinct development should be pursued in compliment to the proposed federal building.

## PARKING

At present parking penetrates into all parcels and pockets of land that are available for the purpose in addition to the streets. The condition is aggravated by the increasing density and functions of the central area.

Provisions are made by the large departmental stores for their customers and by the City in the Market Place. These provisions are inadequate -

This City should conduct a thorough survey of the parking problem.



## PARKING (continued)

### Observation

The alleviation of parking problems is dependent upon both private interests and the City. All large scale buildings within the central area must provide off street parking facilities for their occupants. The City must also provide parking squares to the east and the west of the central commercial district. Within a defined area street parking should thereupon be prohibited.

## WAREHOUSING and INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

We have distinguished between warehousing and industry as they create totally different problems that call for different remedial measures.

### WAREHOUSES

The City's principal functions has been the distribution of goods. Warehouses are of two types, those that distribute merchandise locally and those that export. Different location factors influence their siting. Distribution warehouses have long occupied central sites with rail access, and ancillary business has related itself to them. At the time when re-distribution from warehouses was made by rail, they caused little difficulty in the traffic of the City, but with the increasing use of trucks, the streets adjoining the warehouses have become most congested and have aroused public comment. The needs of warehouses and trucking services are paramount in the economy of the City, but an over emphasis of their requirements may in the long run be detrimental to the City. It is necessary that positive action should be taken to secure the advantages that new warehouses require and still achieve concentration so that inter-communication between warehouses does not become itself a traffic problem. It has been pointed out that trucks taking goods from Edmonton are not fully loaded at one warehouse but are required to call at many before setting out on the highways. A suggested solution to the problem is to construct a truck depot to be served by smaller vehicles that make in-town collections.

*Why change grading necessary*

The exporting warehouses have been sited outside the centre. Cold Storage plants, grain elevators and others such as oil pipe yards are on the fringes of the City. In these fringe localities development has been loose and houses have been built amongst warehouse developments.



## WAREHOUSES (continued)

Houses must not be permitted to mingle with warehousing and create a wasteful usage of land.

### Observations

Much confusion arises in considering warehouses in the same category as industry and a further differentiation is required as between distributing and exporting types. Because of expediency much wastage of land has occurred in encouraging warehouse development to locate itself sporadically.

The allocation of land for warehousing requires to be considered so as to produce concentrations of development in appropriate localities suited to their particular functions.

## INDUSTRIES

The present industrial problem in Edmonton is in attracting and accommodating secondary or "middle" industries. The present pattern of industrial location shows the primary industries located on the north eastern fringes of the City and early settlements nearer the centre. The secondary industries are more widespread with their principal concentrations on the north, centrally and to the south. At the present time new industrial locations are being created along the few remaining unenclosed lengths of track, particularly to the west and the south. An estimate of the total amount of land allocated for industrial use including warehousing and railway yards amounts to about 10% of the total area of the City or about 15% of the built up area.

### Observations

Our observations reveal an extensive wastage of land which has for considerable time been allocated to industrial use, such areas are difficult to consolidate while new industrial sites are being offered in a changing pattern. Under such conditions a serious problem of urban blight is beginning to show itself. In this respect it is urgently necessary that consideration be given to the conservation of existing industrial areas before too rapid a spread takes place. The space industries now require has exceeded the amount of available serviced land within prescribed areas. It is considered advisable for the City to service land in the partially settled industrial areas



## INDUSTRIES (continued)

rather than face inevitable extensions of services, roads and public transport later.

## RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

The density of development over Edmonton as a whole was 4.7 persons per acre in 1948, or approximately 11 persons per acre over the residential areas.

This density appears to be low and is accounted for by extended single family development over an extravagant street system. Beyond this generality, there is in fact a shortage of houses and a serious condition of over-crowding over and above the very great expansion of residential accommodation within the last two years.

The City gives an aspect of single family development and this appears to be the ideal being aimed at in the solution of the housing problem. Only within the last year has flat construction been undertaken on any scale.

The existence in the early stages of post war housing development of extensive areas of municipally owned land already serviced may not have easily permitted a departure from the existing gridiron pattern of subdivision. In general post war housing with few exceptions has resulted in monotonous extensions of the City. In further development particularly now that serviced municipally owned land is exhausted, the opportunity is available to pattern development more freely with a higher density.

Free more modern forms of development are both cheaper to build and financially more secure.

There is probably no single solution to the housing problem but there are undoubtedly several ways in which housing could be assisted.

In England, The United States and in most of the European countries, the problem has been resolved by the construction of low rental dwellings by public housing authorities. Experience in England and the United States shows that it is most economical to build sturdy permanent buildings with roomy accommodation and plenty of open spaces to be assured of a long life in order that they can be amortized over 50 - 60 years. Public housing of



## RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (continued)

this sort has been considered un-Canadian because it is generally regarded that subsidy is a retrogressive step. Without subsidy to the local authorities low income housing needs cannot be met.

A means of obtaining an improvement in housing conditions would be the setting up of an organization to assist a man in constructing a house that would be better than a shack and yet not altogether conforming with the accepted high standard of accommodation. Many citizens who are in need of houses are skillful with their hands and could use their own free time, with the help of their friends, to build small houses for themselves if they had access to building materials. In the Scandinavian countries many houses have been built by this method. There the common practice has been to provide pre-cut and partially assembled material so that the houses have a pleasant character. In this way low income families are able to obtain a house at the cost of the material only. In this City, where success has been obtained with public utilities, it seems that it would be possible to set up a small housing utility for the purpose of assisting people to build for themselves on a lower standard than generally applies.

Many families in the City are housed in rooms and the condition of over-crowding is severe.

The increase in population which the City has experienced, as well as the prospect of further expansion indicates that a survey of housing conditions needs to be made in order to appraise the problem of over-crowding and to formulate a program that would be equal to it.

It is suggested that a physical appraisal be based upon the standard of housing outlined by the American Public Health Association, coupled with a survey of social conditions organized by the welfare agencies of the City.

Much has been already done by the municipality in providing emergency housing, particularly for veterans and their families. Surplus war buildings have been used in various parts of the City to accommodate families having low income. Some provide a better standard of accommodation than



## RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (continued)

others. All are sought for and there have been no vacancies.

In many, particularly the Stout Houses, conditions are congested, and these emergency houses cannot be considered a permanent solution, although they are undoubtedly better than other accommodation provided at the same price. The Dawson Creek huts are possibly the most successful venture in emergency housing in this country. They have been well designed, well maintained and easy to administer. People are proud to live in them and they have been healthy.

There are a number of small houses that are described as "not modern," being below standard in construction and conveniences. These buildings are found in some of the older areas of the City, but most are situated in the outer fringes. Many are outside the City limits altogether. Their number indicates that they form one of the important ways in which the citizens of Edmonton house themselves.

### Observations

The post war extension of housing development has resulted in the main in a monotonous growth of the gridiron pattern of the City. The further development of large units of municipally owned land should be patterned more freely and with a higher density according to more modern techniques.

Low income housing cannot be achieved without the establishment of a local housing authority with considerable subsidy by Provincial or Federal Government.

As a means to meet temporarily the acute overcrowded conditions in the City, the local authority should embark upon a project of providing materials at cost for the erection of houses at a reduced standard of accommodation. So as to assess the critical significance of the state of over-crowding, a survey should be undertaken upon the standard of housing outlined by the American Public Health Association, coupled with a survey of social conditions organized by the local welfare agencies.



## AMENITIES

### The River Park

The river valley is the most prominent natural feature in the pattern of the City. Because of the rapid flow of the river and the structure of the soil, steep banks oppose low banks on the river bends and flat lands alternate with steep prominences. These features have made river crossings difficult but have added immensely to the natural beauty of the valley. Its amenities have always been recognized by those responsible for development and for many years the municipality has been purchasing land in the valley for a great central park. Connected with the valley there are a number of ravines formed by creeks, flowing into the river. These ravines are cut deeply into the plain and can not be used for building sites. It is thus possible for the great central park to stretch back into the developed areas.

The Mill Creek Ravine has been used for a link line, joining the terminals on the North and South Side. The line is little used and greatly injures the amenities of the river, and hampers traffic. There is no valid reason for its continuity when switching could be arranged over the High Level Bridge.

Much of the valley has been reserved for parks and its usable areas have been developed for recreation. There are a number of short lengths of park drives on the banks of the river, which could be developed into a comprehensive system of parkways throughout the whole valley. They could extend far into the countryside, and ultimately join main highways entering the City.

It is suggested that the Provincial Government should acquire the valley beyond the limits of the City as a Provincial Park and be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the parkway system in the district of the capital.

### Local Open Space

The great central park cannot be regarded as providing in itself the whole open space requirements for the City. In the outlying residential districts there is a need for well organized and spacious amenity - to be allocated in areas in conformity with modern recreational standards. The provision of scattered undeveloped lots pending decision upon their ultimate use does not answer the need.



## AMENITIES (continued)

### Street Planting

In the older areas of the City street planting has received attention but in recent years the matter has been neglected. The principal streets in the City should be planted with appropriate borders or groupings of trees. The streets bordering the parks and those leading to them should be carefully planted in order to extend the sense of the park well into the surrounding built up area.

### Architectural control

A consideration of the design and appearance of buildings is an essential aspect of City planning. The form of buildings that are seen from the public parks and other important vantage points should be strictly controlled throughout the City. Particular control should be exerted over buildings that are higher than their neighbors.

### Observations

It is suggested that the Provincial Government should acquire the valley of the river beyond the limits of the City as a Provincial Park and be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the parkway system in the district of the Capital.

Land to be allocated for open space to be set out in areas conforming with modern recreational standards.

A program of street planting should be undertaken.

Control over architectural design of buildings should be exercised throughout the City.

## HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

### HEALTH

Edmonton is a regional health centre of very considerable importance. The report of the Medical Officer of Health shows that many non-residents come to Edmonton for hospital treatment, particularly for serious ailments and child birth due to the hospitalization schemes operative in the Province. This would indicate that until other regional hospitals are built, the city hospitals in Edmonton will have to accommodate patients from the



## HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (continued)

### Health (continued)

surrounding area. From the point of view of a plan therefore, spaces allocated for hospital expansion should be greater here than in other cities of comparable size, and consideration should be given to the establishment of hospital centres in appropriate surroundings.

The City Health Department provides limited clinical services in the Market Annex Building. In time these will be developed further and other clinics will be established in different areas of the City. Land should now be reserved for their convenient siting in neighborhood centres.

### EDUCATION

In Edmonton there are both public and separate schools, providing educational services for twelve grades. In each district there is a public school.

There are two Public High Schools on the South Side and four on the North Side. Besides these there are eight grade schools and high schools operated by the Separate School Board. There are also a number of convents and religious schools.

An aspect of the expansion of population in recent years has been the shortage of accommodation in the schools throughout the City. This is being met by a very large school building program, but in the meantime the space in the schools has to be divided up among all children requiring education, and as a result the schools do not appear to be serving their specific district functions. While it may never be possible to achieve completely homogenous areas served by a school, this remains an ideal of community planning, and it is therefore to be hoped that when the population becomes more stable, the schools will again serve specific district functions.

The allocation of land for school purposes appears to be inadequate. The custom is being followed of merely providing a City block for the purpose without due consideration of modern standards of playground space requirements.

The University of Alberta occupies a large area in the City, and forms an unique section on the South Side. The locality should be particularly



## HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (continued)

safe guarded against encroachments that would be harmful to its welfare and appearance.

Multiple occupancy in this district is a natural evolution of the area but requires to be restricted for the purpose of student accommodation.

### Observations

Consideration should be given to the establishment of hospital centres.

Land should be reserved for the convenient siting of health clinics in neighborhood centres.

The provision of land for schools should be based on modern standards of playground space requirements.

The University district should be safeguarded against encroachments but multiple occupation for the purpose of student accommodation should be permitted.



## PART II

### ADMINISTRATION

#### THE SCOPE OF PLANNING SINCE 1929

Under the Town Planning Act 1929, a local authority is empowered to establish a Town Planning Commission to advise it upon matters relating to town planning, and to prepare an official town plan or scheme, and a zoning bylaw. The local authority may adopt a town plan, a zoning bylaw, or schemes for specific public improvements consistent with the scope of the official town plan. The planning proposals of the local authority have no effect until approved by the Minister of Public Works. To ensure the integrity of its proposals, when approved, both the public and the local authority may be enforced to comply with their provisions. A variation or revocation of the planning proposals has no effect until approved by the Minister, except with regard to certain matters upon which discretion is given to the local authority.

The duties of a Town Planning Commission are purely advisory - it may not exercise executive functions. Despite the generality of the Act, the scope of matters to be dealt with in planning can embrace only items that are clearly defined as public purposes with which the municipality is empowered to deal, namely, to make provisions respecting the use of land for public utilities; public services; streets; public parks and public buildings; and to regulate development by dividing the municipality into districts within which the use of land and of buildings may be controlled. These five defined public purposes alone establish the scope and range of planning proposals.

Planning control under the provisions of the Town Planning Act, was initiated in August 1929 by the appointment of a Town Planning Commission. By virtue of Section 10 (1) of the Act, the City Council delegated the following powers to the Commission. ¶

- (a) to act in an advisory capacity in matters pertaining to town planning,
- (b) to prepare an official town plan or scheme,
- (c) to prepare a zoning bylaw.

The Town Planning Commission has advised the Council on a great variety of matters many of which have led to the adoption of policies that have greatly ¶ Bylaw 5 (1930)



## THE SCOPE OF PLANNING SINCE 1929 (continued)

benefitted The City of Edmonton. It is to be admitted that the Commission has met with indifference, and in certain quarters with positive obstruction, to its activities. There is little doubt in our minds that this has occurred through a lack of specifically delegated and properly co-ordinated duties as between the technical departments of the city administration and the Commission. Since its inception in 1929, specific duties have not been delegated to any municipal department, except to the Building Inspectorate, by virtue of specific designation under Section 105 of the Zoning Bylaw. Nor has any technical officer been officially delegated to assist the Town Planning Commission. The relationship of The City Architect with the Town Planning Commission has come about because of the zeal of that particular officer. It should also be stated that in certain instances the Commission has exceeded its authority, and that departmental interests have been disregarded.

In effect, the activities of the Commission, particularly with respect to its advisory functions, have been fraught with difficulties and contentions which are primarily due to the nebulous nature of its statutory basis, to a lack of departmental co-ordination, and to negative attitudes towards planning.

The Major Street Plan was recommended to Council by the Commission and approved in January 1932 with certain modifications. Further amendments have been made from time to time, some with Bylaw approval and others not. Within the meaning of the Act a Major Street Plan should have been developed as a "planning scheme", and as giving effect to the implementation to a particular feature of an official town plan.<sup>x</sup> At no stage has the plan been submitted to The Minister of Public Works for his approval under the provisions of The Town Planning Act. As it stands, it is merely a scheme for a particular class of public improvements within the provisions of the City Charter. The significance of having thus treated the proposals for the improvement of the streets, throws the Major Street Plan outside the scope of the Town Planning Act.

The Zoning Bylaw recommended by The Town Planning Commission was adopted by Bylaw in 1933 and approved by the Minister. It has been amended from time to time by Bylaw. In 1942 a consolidation and a re-arrangement of the Bylaw was made, but the consolidated form has not been approved officially by the

<sup>x</sup> See Sec. 12 (c) Town Planning Act, 1929.



## THE SCOPE OF PLANNING SINCE 1929 (continued)

Council. The Zoning Bylaw has been enacted in the spirit of an elaboration of the managerial functions of local authority control over development which is permitted under the Town and Village Act.<sup>24</sup> The Town Planning Act has merely enabled a more diverse control to be exerted and provided a more specific legal basis for its enforcement. The Zoning Bylaw has not been regarded as the instrument of implementation of an official plan, in the manner in which it is implied by the Town Planning Act.

Viewed broadly, the planning functions exercised by the municipality since 1929, cannot be regarded as embracing and taking full advantage of the provisions of the Town Planning Act. No official town plan has come into being - the Major Street plan is beyond the scope of the Act, and the concept of a Zoning Bylaw as an instrument of implementation of an official town plan has not been recognized.

In consideration of the growing importance of The City of Edmonton, the exercising of planning function over the last twenty years cannot be regarded as other than inadequate, and the responsibility for failing to deal with planning within the meaning and intent of the Town Planning Act, cannot be avoided by the Town Planning Commission and City Administration.

It is of course recognized that this criticism is to some extent met by the recent appointment of a City Planning Officer, whose duties will commence in October of this year. But in itself that single step will not be sufficient without a more positive recognition and acceptance by the City Council of the magnitude and importance of planning.

### Recommendation: -

It is recommended that the City Council adopt, by resolution, a proposal to plan The City of Edmonton within the full meaning of the Act and upon such resolution to impose an interim development control upon development in the City, pending the bringing into being of an official plan.

### Recommendation:-

It is also recommended so as to ensure the full realization of planning

x T. & V. Act - S.S. 226 n, 227 f & 240



## THE SCOPE OF PLANNING SINCE 1929 (continued)

### Recommendation (continued)

objectives, that the Council establish quite clearly throughout the administrative organization, an understanding that planning far exceeds a sub ordinate role in City management, and that it entails the direction and co-ordination of every municipal responsibility towards the achievement of a well balanced and ordered development of the City as a whole.

### THE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

Section 10 of The Town Planning Act enables a local authority to establish a Town Planning Commission, and to delegate to it such powers as may be necessary, other than the power of raising money or expropriating land, for the specific purpose of advising the local authority on matters pertaining to town planning, on the preparation of an official town plan or scheme and on the preparation of a zoning bylaw. The Act is explicit on the advisory functions of the Town Planning Commission.

Though the Act does not specifically require that a local authority shall proceed with its planning purposes by first establishing a Town Planning Commission, it is undoubtedly implied in the Act that it should so so. Nevertheless a local authority may itself exercise its powers under Section 12 of the Act without appointing a Commission.

The commonly understood purpose in setting up of a semi-autonomous citizen body to advise the local authority on its planning functions, is to provide a safe-guard against abuses. It is usually assumed that because of their integrity and their knowledge of local conditions, the members of the Commission will ensure a proper equity in matters of planning as between public and private interests. It is to be observed that planning as a function of local government is still in a formative stage, and that there is a distrust of municipal government on the grounds that external political pressures on the one hand, and the abuse of municipal authority on the other, are rife.

It is doubtful if a continuing reliance can be placed upon the Town Planning Commission as constituted at present, to achieve the planning purposes for



## THE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION (continued)

which it has been established, namely, to guide the local authority on the physical planning of its area.

The semi-autonomous citizen commission is regarded as a means of keeping planning above politics. It is contended that by unpaid citizen representation on Commissions, and by limiting their activities to advisory duties, an adequate instrument of control is established over the political motives which might be brought to bear on planning activities. It is also often assumed that a Commission is competent to plan and to take a far-sighted view of urban development.

As appointments to local planning commissions are made by Council, and as Council is an elected body, the choice of members is liable to be influenced by political intentions which aim at securing the support of groups and interests to which members are affiliated. It is also to be observed that particular occupational groups and interests have sought and obtained representation on Commissions. The claim that a Planning Commission is aloof from the pressures of vested interest may be true in some instances, but the composition of most planning agencies is such as to make it doubtful that an objective view point can be maintained with respect to the increasingly important economic and social problems with which municipal authorities are now faced. When first appointed to a Commission, the average citizen knows little about planning. It is sometimes assumed that after some participation in meetings he becomes sufficiently informed to contribute to the intricate considerations upon which a Commission is in fact required to deliberate. Unfortunately, the members of a Commission cannot give the amount of time necessary to study and develop an adequate understanding of the complexities of physical planning. Most members of a Commission have neither the time nor the interest to attend meetings, nor do they as a rule conceive of planning as being more than a device for exercising zoning control.

It is sometimes maintained that the Commission is an important instrument for interpreting the work of the Council or its officials to the public and of protecting it against attack, but in this respect Commissions have not played a very significant role. It is usually found that the presence of



## THE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION (continued)

an outstanding and enthusiastic personality on the Commission is the main contributory factor in obtaining public recognition of municipal planning activity.

Moreover, Municipal executives and officials are seldom found to be fully sympathetic with Planning Commissions nor do they respect the functions that these agencies are required to fulfil. They usually regard an advisory citizen body as somewhat amateurish, and of little value. They limit the range of activity of planning commissions by failing to make adequate financial provisions for their needs and for technical assistance. They frequently totally disregard their recommendations, or if expedient rely upon Planning Commissions to solicit public approval for particular undertakings.

In brief, the Town Planning Commission of The City of Edmonton is not an effective agency. It is unable to carry out the duties delegated to it by Council because of constitution, the inexperience of its members in planning matters and because of the regard in which it is held by both municipal executive and technical officers of the City.

It is of critical importance that a cleavage be made from existing stereotyped approaches to planning that place reliance upon an advisory planning commission. There is no doubt that in the formative stages of planning, a great deal of good may result in the employment of an advisory body as the focal device in initiating planning activities. In a City of such dimensions as Edmonton, positive achievements can be better secured by the close integration of departmental organizations within the municipal government itself, and by means of establishing a City Planning Department with the authority and stature of other civic departments. The recent appointment of a City Planner by the Council offers the opportunity of a properly integrated planning service within the municipality, which if given recognition will achieve more positive results.

Over and above these considerations there still remains the question of citizen opinion on matters of public concern - not on technicalities but on aspects that affect public sentiment. Informal discussions with members of the Town Planning Commission has therefore led to the conclusion that - in view of the need to ensure that public opinion is suitably



## THE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION (continued)

voiced on matters of general planning interests it would be most advisable to create a citizen body outside the provisions of the Town Planning Act.

### Recommendation: -

It is therefore recommended that the Bylaw appointing the Town Planning Commission under the provisions of the Town Planning Act, be revoked.

### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that Council should appoint a citizen committee outside the provisions of the Town Planning Act, entitled the Citizens' Planning Committee for the sole purpose of obtaining public opinion and advice on matters of general planning interest.

### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that in order to fulfil the function hereafter described with respect to the preparation of planning schemes and their implementation, that the City Council establish a Standing Committee on City Planning.

### Recommendation:-

In order to ensure equity with respect to planning functions to be exercised by The City of Edmonton, it is recommended that the procedures under Section 14 to 19 of the Act, relative to the authority of the Minister with respect to his powers of approval, shall be assiduously followed by Council, and furthermore that Section 13 of the Act, respecting adherence to an official town plan, shall be thoroughly recognized throughout the municipal organization.

## THE MAJOR STREET PLAN

The Major Street Plan cannot be regarded as contribution to the planning of the City. By frequent amendments and gradual accretions, it has become a general plan of local improvements in which no guiding principles determine the design and the relative functions of the principal streets.

### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that the Major Street Plan be revoked on the grounds that it performs no useful purpose with respect to the planning of the City.



## THE ZONING BYLAW AND THE ZONING APPEAL BOARD

### The Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw was passed in October 1933. The districts and the schedules of permitted and prohibited entries were based on existing uses at the time, and upon a forecast of the pattern that development would eventually take. By means of the regulatory processes of the Zoning Bylaw the evolution of the City was to be directed within particular channels.

The Bylaw was enacted without dependence or relationship to an official plan of the City and thereby became the sole instrument in controlling the growth of the City. The concept underlying the Zoning Bylaw was no doubt to regulate development so as to prevent both public and private nuisance and to maintain property values. Zoning became, in fact, a purely managerial function of local government.

During the fifteen years of its operation, the routine administration of the Bylaw has been effectively maintained, and variations to the districts and exceptions to the schedules of permitted and prohibitive uses were instigated to keep abreast of trends in development. In a number of instances, however, variations did not conform to the spirit and intentions of the Bylaw nor with the procedural requirements of the Zoning Bylaw and The Town Planning Act.

The principle upon which a variety of uses were permitted in different use-districts to a large extent defeats the evolution of the pattern of predominant uses which the Zoning Bylaw aimed at bringing about. In many use-areas alternative types of development have the right of entry without constraint. In a multi-storey residential district, for example, a single family dwelling has the right of entry. In an area devoted to local business a multi-storey dwelling or a single family residence may be built according to the proscriptions of the Bylaw.

The present pattern of development nullifies many of the prescriptions of the Bylaw in 1933. In other words, the basic description of use-districts with their classification, no longer bears reality to existing conditions. The pattern of the City has so changed as to call for a fundamental revision of the Zoning Bylaw.



## THE ZONING BYLAW AND THE ZONING APPEAL BOARD (continued)

### The Zoning Bylaw (continued)

#### Recommendation:-

It is therefore recommended that the Zoning Bylaw at present in existence, be revoked and that an interim development order should be placed upon development, pending the bringing into being of a new Zoning Bylaw.

The concept of a Zoning Bylaw as the sole instrument for directing the evolution of the City is out-moded. A form of Zoning control which represents the mere segregation of particular uses, administered so as to prevent nuisance, is not strictly an aspect of planning - it affects little more than sporadic public control over most flagrant abuses and does not guide development in any positive sense. It fails to achieve a rational use of land as a whole. Zoning regulations must be related to the comprehensive planning of the physical development of the territory of the municipality. It should be regarded as the basic instrument for implementing an official plan. It provides the means whereby the day to day happenings with regard to the use of land, can be co-ordinated so as to fuse properly with the broader and more dominant aspect of City development. It is a regulatory device whereby divergent aspects of the use of land are resolved by means of a flexible control over the constantly changing pattern of urban development.

#### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that the revised Zoning Bylaw should be set up as an instrument of implementation of an official Town Plan, and that it should not be brought into effect until an official plan has been adopted.

It was noticed that in the present Zoning Bylaw map "A" districts, (Public Parks) embody areas which are not in the possession of the local authority. It is important to realize that open space cannot be attained by the prohibition of development. There is a marked distinction between private open space as such, and a public park. It is suggested that the delineation of "A" Public Parks Districts should be remedied.

Much confusion and uncertainty exists over the meaning of the descriptive clauses of the Bylaw. They appear to have been devised without a clear



THE ZONING BYLAW AND THE ZONING APPEAL BOARD (continued)

The Zoning Bylaw (continued)

understanding of the technical objectives being aimed at, and to have been written without legal assistance.

Recommendation:-

It is recommended that when the Zoning Bylaw is being redrafted, the clauses of the bylaw should be written by the City Solicitor in close association with the City Planner.

With regard to architectural control over the design of buildings, the existing bylaw only prescribes such control within the area adjacent to the Civic Centre and in Local Business Districts.

Recommendation:-

It is recommended that architectural control be exercised over the whole of the municipal area and that an adjudicating panel on architectural design be established, consisting of The City Architect and two members of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

With respect to matters affecting site coverage, particularly in local business districts, it was observed that undesirable developments are occurring throughout the City through the lack of continuity between adjoining commercial premises along street frontages. Wasteful development is taking place and unsanitary pockets of land are coming into being between adjoining commercial and other properties. This may be due in many instances to the parcel of land being too wide for local business needs.

Recommendation:-

It is recommended that the commercial development be required to cover the whole frontage of a site, except at corner sites.

Control over advertising is exercised in residential areas with good effect but not in other use areas. The most flagrantly obtrusive displays seem to occur on the flanking walls of tall buildings and in general throughout the commercial areas of the City.



## THE ZONING BYLAW AND THE ZONING APPEAL BOARD (continued)

### The Zoning Bylaw (continued)

#### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that standards for advertising be devised for all non-residential districts and that control be exercised with vigor.

It is necessary to point out that American Zoning techniques are being adopted in Canada without realization of their statutory impact. Though there are certain similarities in American and Canadian urban development, the legal basis for planning is quite different. American zoning practices have developed specifically in regard to the constitutional structure and the legislative basis of local government in the U.S.A. with the result that highly involved technicalities allowing little elasticity have been brought into play in order to comply with written constitutional requirements. In Canada, the legal basis for planning is quite different. It consists of a comparatively simple stratification of legislative authority and of local government systems that calls for less complicated zoning techniques than are practical in many American cities.

#### The Zoning Appeal Board

Under the provisions of The Town Planning Act, a Zoning Appeal Board may be established for purposes of hearing and determining appeals against the administration of the Zoning Bylaw. An appeal lies with any person aggrieved by the administration of the Zoning Bylaw and in certain cases where discretion is given to the Appeal Board. An order of the Board in disposing of any appeal is final and conclusive and there is no further appeal. However, under Section 29 of the Act, it is evident that there is power resting with the Minister of Public Works to exert his authority respecting an abuse of Zoning powers by the local authority - presumably also against aspects with which the Zoning Appeal Board is empowered to deal.

Under the provisions of the Zoning Bylaw of The City of Edmonton, the establishment of a Zoning Appeal Board and its powers are clearly prescribed. The matters with which it may exercise its discretion are described under Section 1804. The discretionary powers of the Zoning Appeal Board are essential in order to deal with certain types of variation in particular districts, but



## THE ZONING BYLAW AND THE ZONING APPEAL BOARD (continued)

### The Zoning Appeal Board (continued)

its authority to deal with a fundamental change in the Zoning Bylaw, particularly as regards the extension or variation of use-districts is limited, both by the intention of the Town Planning Act and by the enumerated provisions of Section 1804 of the Zoning Bylaw.

In examining the Minutes of Meetings of the Zoning Appeal Board, it has been observed that the Board has in some instances, exceeded its powers and has failed to maintain the integrity of the Zoning Bylaw.

With the rapidly changing pattern of the City and without adequate technical advice on the significance of its decisions, the consequences of its decisions may not have been realized. It was also evident that in one or two cases the Zoning Appeal Board has been obliged to meet decisions taken by the City Council.

The existence of the Zoning Appeal Board is an essential instrument in zoning administration, whereby variations of a certain limited type may be dealt with speed, but it is important that under no circumstances should a Zoning Appeal Board be able to destroy the integrity of the Zoning Bylaw itself.

### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that the Zoning Appeal Board be continued, but that its discretionary powers be limited, and furthermore that any of its decisions, bordering upon matters which may require to be dealt with by Bylaw amendment, should be presented to Council, according to the procedure that is laid out for that purpose in the Zoning Bylaw.

It is recommended that appeal from the decisions of the Zoning Appeal Board should be allowed and that the Minister of Public Works should be the final arbiter.

It is also recommended that the City Planning Officer should be an appointed member of the Zoning Appeal Board with full right to vote.



## MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

To give effect to the recommendations previously made, it will be necessary to clarify the duties of the various municipal departments concerned directly or indirectly with City planning.

We have considered the functions of the Technical Development Board and we regard it as a significant stride in the evolution of the municipal administration of The City of Edmonton. It brings together the superintendents of departments concerned with the co-ordination and planning of the development of the City with respect to the five year program of public utilities and services. It provides the very basis upon which to create a comprehensive fusion of municipal undertakings concerned with the growth of the City as a whole. It provides the nucleus for effective City planning.

### Recommendation:-

It is therefore recommended: -

Title: That the Technical Development Board should be reconstituted "The City Planning and Development Board."

Membership: That the Board should have a central or working committee, composed of The City Engineer, the City Architect, the Medical Officer of Health, and the City Planner, and one of the City Commissioners as an ex-officio member. As soon as it is considered appropriate the City Planner should be appointed the Chairman of the Board.

In general the Board should be authorized to draw into its deliberations any department, including the Industrial Commissioner, that is concerned with any aspect of the development of the City.

Duties:- That its function be expanded to co-ordinate all municipal duties and responsibilities - economic, social, physical and administrative, so as to be able to outline policy with respect to the planning and development of the City as whole, in particular, to be responsible for -

- (a) the preparation of an outline town plan,
- (b) the preparation of a zoning bylaw required to implement the plan,



## MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION (continued)

### Recommendation (continued)

Duties: (c) the preparation of such official schemes as are required from time to time to implement the adopted outline town plan.

#### The City

Planner: That the Board should delegate to the City Planning Department such technical and other investigations as are involved in the preparation of the outline plan, the zoning bylaw, and schemes of implementation.

Procedure: That the Board should conform with the established procedure of presenting its advice and recommendations to the Council through the City Commissioners.

### The City Planner

Besides his duties with the Planning and Development Board, the City Planner will be required to undertake many routine administrative and technical duties and to establish and organize the working of his department.

### Recommendation:-

That the duties and responsibilities of the City Planning Department should be clearly demarcated with respect to the other civic departments, particularly in relation to The City Architect and Building Inspector's Department, so that an immediate transference is affected between zoning functions on the one hand and the functions of the Building Inspector on the other.

With respect to the administration of the Zoning Bylaw it is recommended that the Building Inspector should release the member of his staff most conversant with the administration and day to day routines of the Zoning Bylaw, and that all papers and data, relevant thereto, be transferred to the City Planner.

That in order to undertake the duties that may be delegated to the City Planner by the Board with respect to the preparation of an outline plan, the revision of the Zoning Bylaw and the preparation of schemes of implementation, the City Planning Department should be provided with adequate technical and administrative staff as soon as possible. In this respect, it is considered that the City Planner should be provided



## MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION (continued)

### The City Planner (continued)

#### Recommendation:- (continued)

with an Assistant, with the rank of an Assistant Superintendent, three technical assistants and one town planning inspector. (including the transfer from the City Architect's Department.) In addition the Department should be given adequate secretarial and clerical assistance, and should be provided with sufficient accommodation to establish a well equipped drafting room with appropriate facilities.

That with regard to public relations, the City Planner should be empowered, and provided with a sufficient budget, to embark upon a program of stimulating and educating public interest in planning matters.

## DISTRICT PLANNING CONTROL

If the present rate of development continues for the next few years, the urban pattern will begin to assume metropolitan characteristics. The central urban core of Edmonton itself will consolidate, and satellite agglomerations will come into being in the surrounding countryside. The municipal structure may then well alter from the present simple pattern of a City surrounded by municipal districts, to a complex of inter dependent cities and towns. The evolution of parts of the surrounding country from rural municipal control to the fully incorporated towns or cities may be more beneficial than the continuous expansion of the area of jurisdiction of the City of Edmonton. Until the transition begins to take place a rigorous control should be exerted over development within a broad area of countryside surrounding the City of Edmonton.

Each of the Municipal Districts surrounding Edmonton and the towns of Beverly and St. Albert are at present exercising rural zoning and building bylaw controls under the authority and subject to the provisions of The Town Planning Act. Their planning controls have not been devised to deal with the expansion of urban development into municipal districts surrounding The City of Edmonton.

Evidence of the difficulties that might confront The City of Edmonton and



## DISTRICT PLANNING CONTROL (continued)

other municipalities jointly, is to be seen at present in the Municipal District of Stony Plain. The Municipality has requested The City of Edmonton to extend its zoning control over West Jasper Place. Such an extension of administrative control, though sorely needed, is unjustifiable on the grounds of potential encroachments upon local autonomy; the imposition of a standard of control that cannot be economically and socially sustained by the residents of West Jasper Place; and the function imposed upon The City of Edmonton in the extension of its administrative services.

Under Section 11 of The Town Planning Act, two or more municipalities may jointly appoint a Regional Planning Commission to which may be delegated such powers as the municipalities see fit for the purpose of carrying into effect a Town Planning Scheme. The powers and duties of such a Commission are not prescribed except they may not raise money or expropriate land. In effect, a Regional Planning Commission would be an advisory body to which could not be surrendered the rights and responsibilities of implementation within the area of jurisdiction of any one of the constituent municipalities. In practice, a Regional Planning Commission is brought into being by the voluntary association of municipalities of a somewhat similar governmental order, having common problems that require concerted action for their solution. The difficulties that beset the functioning of the Regional Planning Commission are similar to those of a Town Planning Commission, with the additional problem of the delegation of authority to one or other of the municipalities to carry the burden of the administrative and technical machinery, the suspicion with which the central or most powerful municipal unit is regarded; the problem of ensuring that each municipality maintains an inviolable attitude regarding the implementation of a joint plan; and lastly, the apportionment of financial contributions as between the constituent members of the Regional Planning Commission.

The particular conditions which hold at the present time in the vicinity of The City of Edmonton, suggest a departure from the procedure prescribed under Section 11 of the Act.

The City of Edmonton is a single dominating municipal unit in a rural area. It is inclined to consider that urban expansion should be contained within

*Conclusion*



## DISTRICT PLANNING CONTROL (continued)

its own City limits. The surrounding municipal districts with the sole exception of Stony Plain, regard any encroachments by The City of Edmonton, as potential threats to their autonomy. The area surrounding The City of Edmonton is, in very many respects, shepherded by Provincial Government with respect to municipal affairs, planning control and industrial development, pending the development of incorporation of more superior units of local government. In addition, The City of Edmonton as the Capital City of the Province of Alberta, should impose upon government certain responsibilities with respect to the City itself and its surroundings.

Under such conditions, it would seem advisable for any form of sub-regional or district planning control to be exercised as an extension of the responsibilities already resting with The Town and Rural Planning Advisory Board rather than bringing into being a planning commission based on the voluntary association of two or more municipalities around Edmonton, provided of course that the municipalities are also able to exert appropriate influences and take part in the planning control of their particular areas of jurisdiction.

### Recommendation:-

It is recommended that a District Planning Board be established as follows:

<u>Title:-</u>	The Edmonton District Planning Board.
<u>Constituent Members of the Board:-</u>	The City of Edmonton, The Towns of St. Albert, Beverly, Devon, Fort Saskatchewan and Leduc. The Municipal Districts of Stony Plain, Sturgeon, Strathcona, Morinville and Leduc.
<u>Members of the Board:-</u>	One member nominated by The Minister of Public Works and one from each of the constituent members.
<u>Duties and Responsibilities:-</u>	To exercise planning control on behalf of constituent members, if so desired, over a defined area, containing a number of townships within the Municipal Districts, the City of Edmonton, and the towns of Beverly, St. Albert, Devon, Fort Saskatchewan and Leduc; in particular to safeguard the growth of settlement so as to ensure a



## DISTRICT PLANNING CONTROL (continued)

### Recommendation (continued)

Duties and Responsibilities:  
(continued)      balanced and well ordered development of urbanization in the area, respecting health, education, highways etc. etc.

Technical Staff:-      The technical staff of the Provincial Town Planning Branch under the direction of The Director of Town Planning, to be expanded so as to undertake appropriate technical and other investigations, and the routine administration under the Act.

Financial Contribution:-      The Government of Alberta to be responsible for the major portion of the monies required to establish and maintain the technical services necessary, the constituent members contributing the remainder on an agreed basis.

It is suggested that this recommendation be transmitted to The Minister of Municipal Affairs, The Minister of Public Works and the Municipalities referred to above, with the request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and to The Minister of Public Works, initiate the formation of The Edmonton District Planning Commission.

### STATUTORY PROCEDURE

The procedures recommended depart in some respects from the provisions of the Town Planning Act, though they seem to come within the general intent of the Act.

1. Procedure for preparing and adopting an Official Town Plan, a Scheme, and a Zoning Bylaw.

#### Stage 1.

The Council resolves to plan and thereupon requests the Minister to bring into effect an interim development order covering all developments within the municipality, pending the approval by the Minister of the official plan.

The purpose of interim development control is to exercise authority over development while the plan is being prepared. All proposals with



## STATUTORY PROCEDURE (continued)

### Stage 1 (continued)

with respect to land use will require approval by the Council under the interim development order. It will enable Council to grant consent without causing injurious affection by its later planning proposals. No control under Zoning is necessary during this stage as all forms of development will require consent under interim development.

The provisions of the Act do not envisage such procedure though the concept of interim development is recognized with respect to zoning - Sec. 29 (a) (Amendment 31.3.48).

An amendment to Sec. 10 of the Act may be needed which would be generally beneficial for the administration of Town Planning in the Province.

### Stage 2.

Upon the recommendation of the Planning and Development Board, the Council should approve the official town plan by Bylaw under Sec. 17 of the Act, and follow the procedure of Sec. 18 & 19 respecting approval of the Minister.

Sec. 13 respecting the effect of adoption of the Plan then comes into play.

No departure from the provisions of this Act is called for.

### Stage 3. Implementation

With regard to the scope and preparation of a Zoning Bylaw, Sections 22 and 23 (2) (3) & (4) of the Act should be followed. Adoption of the Bylaw as an instrument of implementation might be by virtue of Section 14 rather than the generality of Section 22 if it is considered likely to give greater latitude. Approval of the Minister would then be under Sec. 14 instead of Sec. 23 (5). With respect to the Zoning Appeal Board, its status as final appeal authority should be omitted from the Bylaw and reference in that regard should be to the Minister. An amendment to Sec. 28 would seem desirable to enable the Minister to deal more expeditiously with appeals by empowering him to appoint a person or persons to conduct a public enquiry on his behalf, if he considers fit.



## STATUTORY PROCEDURE (continued)

### Planning Schemes

The provisions of the Act are suitable and should be followed.

### The Edmonton District Planning Board

While not conforming with Sect. 11 the required procedure could be put into effect by regulation issued by the Minister.

These observations merely direct attention to the more obvious departures from the provisions of the Town Planning Act that may be necessary to embark upon planning according to the recommendations made.

### Recommendation:-

That the City Solicitor and the City Planner discuss the matter with the Provincial Department of Town Planning and the Attorney General and report upon the legal complexities to be met.

### CONCLUSIONS

During the last 20 years The City of Edmonton has exercised a beneficial control over the municipality with the assistance of the Town Planning Commission. The stature of the City has now grown to the extent that it is able to exercise such control more fully. The appointment of the City Planner is evidence of its intentions to do so and the coming into being of the Technical Development Board mark a step forward in the co-ordination of the Technical organization of the municipal administration.

With the expression of public opinion, and the cultivation of citizen interests in the problems of planning that lie ahead of the City of Edmonton, the stage can be set for the positive implementation of the Town Planning Act.

The observations and recommendations presented in this report are framed so as to point out the salient features in the physical pattern of the City, and the administrative measures that would need to be taken into account to embark upon fuller planning responsibilities under the Town Planning Act.